لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

Zahur 1355 — August 1976

ACTING EDITOR

NUR-UD-DIN MUNEER

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the false Religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

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The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din as Khalifa-tul.Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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Secretary,
Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions,
Tahrik-i-Jadid, Rabwah, Pakistan.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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NUR-UD-DIN MUNEER

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CONTENTS

1. The Creation of Women from a Rib ... 207
Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad

2. The Transformation wrought by The Holy Prophet ... 212

3. Some Misunderstandings about the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam ... 220
Nur-ud-Din Muneer

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نحمدہٗ ونصلی علیٰ رسولہ الکریم

The Review of Religions

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The Creation of Women from a Rib

An extract from an Urdu book *Sair-i-Ruhani* (Eng. Spiritual Journey), by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Second Successor of the Promised Messiah. The passage brings out the significance of a well-known tradition ascribing the birth of women to a rib. (Ed.)

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A tradition of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) purports to say that women have been created from a rib. The text of this tradition is خلقن من ضلع i.e., "They (women) have been created from a rib", and not خلقت حواء من ضلع i.e., "Eve was created from a rib." The pertinent verses of the Holy Quran also speak of women in general and not of Eve particularly, as for instance the verse خلق منها زوجها i.e., "created therefrom its mate", (4 : 1). Eve is indeed not mentioned in any tradition in this context. If the wording of a tradition would have been خلقت زوجة ادم من ضلع then it would have been correct to say that Eve, the wife of Adam was created from a rib. As there is no such tradition it would be wrong to apply the rib-creation theory to Eve only and exclude the rest of

women from it. Rather another tradition expressly states خلقت النساء من ضلع i.e., women have been created from a rib. As the Holy Quran and traditions refer to women in general regarding their creation it settles the point that the tradition under consideration applies to all women and not to Eve alone.

It remains to be seen, however, what indeed is the significance of this tradition. Why did the Holy Prophet make this peculiar remark when women are also born like men and there is nothing unusual about it? The fact is that the tradition is metaphorical and not susceptible of a literal interpretation. It attributes a rib-like curvature to female temperament. In Arabic usage, when the birth of someone is associated with a certain other element the intention is to emphasize their mutual affinity. The metaphor signifies that the specified element is an inborn quality of that person's disposition. Many learned commentators of Traditions hold the same view. For instance, the renowned Commentary, Majmaul Bihar by name, referring to this tradition, puts the same meanings on it.

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It does not, however, cast any reflection on a woman, nor imputes to her any bad motives. It simply points out to a quality which is inherent in her nature, i.e., she feels a bit of rivalry with her husband and a desire to dominate him. This trait is so pronounced in her character that she criticizes him unreservedly and hardly agrees with him in anything without an argument. By this device she attracts her husband and reassures herself that after all she is the mistress of the house. She may be doing it regularly in her day to day life. But all the same she loves and adores her husband, co-operates with him and makes immense sacrifices for his comfort.

The habit of criticism is so ingrained in her nature that its repression would result in breaking her heart and impairing her personality. If a ban is put on her self-expression and she is forcibly kept tongue tied, her initiative and intellect may get blighted and she may be reduced to the level of an unthink-

ing animal. To preserve her integrity and also to ensure domestic peace, the Holy Prophet has enunciated a golden rule. He has forbidden men from imposing restrictions on their spouses arbitrarily and exhorted them to welcome their opposition, also to win their point through persuasion. His own treatment of his wives fully conforms to this principle.

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It is related that once the Holy Prophet got angry with his wives and secluded himself from them. Hazrat Umar (subsequently his second Successor), came to know of it as his own daughter was married to him. He lived in a subarban village of Medina where he had business partnership with an Ansari (a Medinite Muslim brother). Both had arranged it between them to visit Medina by turns, collect important news, especially about the Holy Prophet, like, the revelations descended upon him, the theme of his sermons, etc., and to intimate the same to the other partner. By this device both were perfecting their religious education and promoting their business prospects.

On a certain night about the time of Isha prayers, the Ansari came back from his trip to Medina. He was extremely upset and knocked furiously at Hazrat Umar's door, shouting his name repeatedly and calling upon him to come out. When Hazrat Umar heard his agitated shouts he feared that something dreadful must have happened in Medina. It was rumoured that the town was likely to be invaded by a Christian king. He was alarmed that the attack might have started. Smoothing his cloak he came out at once and asked the Ansari the cause of his perturbation. He told him that the Holy Prophet had divorced his wives.

Hazrat Umar was bewildered at this news and started for Medina immediately. There he met the Holy Prophet and asked him whether he had left his house to which he replied in the affirmative. Then, referring to the rumour afloat about his divorcing his wives he asked him whether it was correct. The Holy Prophet said, "No. I have not divorced any of them."

Hazrat Umar felt relieved and expressed his gratitude to the Almighty God.

Then obtaining his permission, he related the following episode to the Holy Prophet. He said, "O Prophet of God! In Mecca we never allowed our wives to meddle with our affairs. But since my wife has come to Medina she is never tired of it. Once I took her to task and warned her that if she dared to counsel me again, I would set her right. But instead of being frightened at this threat she reacted sharply and blamed me for arrogating to myself a position loftier than that of the Holy Prophet. For, she said that she had seen herself the Holy Prophet bearing calmly with his wives' criticism and counsels and remarked poignantly who then I was to forbid her from it and scold her on that account!"

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Continuing the narrative, Hazrat Umar said, "I was stunned to hear this and asked my wife to reconsider it and tell me the truth. She confirmed it again. It made me extremely apprehensive of my daughter's fortune and I repaired to her immediately. Introducing her to the situation, I warned her not to be forward with the Holy Prophet and never to argue with him, for he might get provoked any time and divorce her for her presumptuousness.

"Hazrat Ayesha (the learned spouse of the Holy Prophet) was at that time within earshot of us. When she heard me giving this advice to my daughter, she exclaimed 'who are you to interfere with the Holy Prophet's domestic affairs, begone. So I left," concluded Hazrat Umar.

This tickled the Holy Prophet to laugh and put an end to his anger. Hazrat Umar had related this incident to him with the same purpose, i.e., to amuse him and to appease his anger.

Some people deny the female sex the right of criticiz-

ing the male. But a woman cannot help it otherwise. She is made to compete with man and to hold him under her sway. Any bid to curb this spirit willfully will only mar her health and retard her growth. To safeguard her well-being and domestic happiness, the Holy Prophet has enjoined upon a husband to condone her faults, if any, and to let his wife express herself freely. This indeed is the true significance of the tradition under consideration but some people wrongly put literal interpretion on it and say that she was created from a rib in the physical sense.

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(English translation by Nur-ud-Din Muneer)

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The Transformation wrought by the Holy Prophet

To have an idea of the miraculous transformation wrought by the greatest benefactor of mankind, the Holy Prophet who was born in the land of Hadjaz, it is necessary to cast a glance at the state of Arabia before and after his appearance. Before his advent, the Arabs worshipped strange gods and paid Divine honours to idols made of stone. They had no faith in the unity of God and in the day of judgement. They were in love with their false deities and attributed to them Divine powers. They believed that none but their idols brought about rain and made the earth yield its produce, and that the idols created the embryo in the womb and had full control over things pertaining to life and death. Every false god found in them ready believers. Each one of them believed himself to be under the patronage of a special deity before whom he bowed down. To him he addressed his supplications and prayers in time of distress, to him he looked up for the reward of his good works and before him he laid his needs and complaints.

They were quite ignorant of the truth and walked in the dark crooked paths of falsehood. They were content with their false gods and had no higher aspirations. They laboured under the delusion that their idols alone could answer their prayers and that God Himself was too high to meddle with human affairs. They firmly adhered to the belief that God had delegated to their deities dominion over the worlds of spirit and matter and invested them with all the Divine powers, Himself keeping aloof from this world. They were fully persuaded that their idols interceded for them with God, brought them into His nearness, gave them relief from their pains and led them

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to all sorts of success.

This is a brief summary of the religion of the pre-Islamic Arabs, the practical outcome of which was that they plunged themselves headlong into all sorts of brutal excesses, and what gave a still darker tinge to this picture was that they took a savage pride in their sins. They freely indulged in adultry and theft, murdered the innocent and robbed the stranger, ate up the property of orphans, oppressed the poor and tyrannized over the weak, and committed all sorts of sin without fear of retribution. They brought low the dignity of human nature and fell away from morality. They sank into wickedness and became like wild beasts. In their revolt against God they went beyond all bounds. Their poets out of sheer impudence sang songs insulting to the fair sex. The rich among them amused themselves with drinking, gambling and quarrelling. Those who claimed to be thrifty trampled upon the rights of widows and orphans and their own blood-relations, and wasted their gains in the gratification of their carnal desires. One of the most horrible features of Arab society was infanticide. They made away with their children for fear of poverty and despatched their daughters in particular because they thought it a disgrace to give them in marriage. They were characterized by all the base and beastly qualities which can disgrace human nature. Fornication was so commonly practised by their men and women that a large section of their society was composed of men of illegitimate birth. If there was some one among them who was pure-minded and detested their evil deeds, he had not the moral courage to express his abhorrence and utter words of counsel for fear of his own life and property. To be brief, the Arabs were a people who had never heard the voice of a preacher and were utter strangers to virtue and piety. There were very few among them who were truthful or just.

In such dark days when all Arabia was corrupt to the core and its people were utterly polluted from within as well as

from without, there appeared among them a prophet at Mecca. But they rejected him and refused to listen to his healing words. With a stubborn perverseness they persisted in their evil ways, and actuated by spite began to persecute their best well-wisher. He held up under their persecutions and bore them patiently. He met their malice with benevolence and always returned good for evil and approached them like a well-meaning and sincere friend. For a long time he walked about the streets of Mecca, friendless and alone. On the one hand, he bore his sufferings with apostolic patience, and on the other, spent whole nights in praying for his benighted countrymen. At last his prayers were answered and the sun of truth shone forth in its full effulgence. In a short time Arabia was completely transformed. The hearts of seekers after truth were drawn to him with a mighty magnetism and every lover of truth began to seek the pleasure of the Lord. It seemed as if angels had come down from heaven to cast their holy influence over the hearts of men. Those who accepted the chosen one of God showed extraordinary zeal for his cause. They laid down their lives for his sake and sealed their sincerity with their blood. By their deeds they proved to the world that they were the true and faithful servants of God. In the days of ignorance they were immersed in the depths of darkness, but the religion of God brought them into light and liberty. Their evil dispositions were changed for virtuous inclinations. Their nocturnal orgies gave place to heartfelt prayers and their morning draughts, to singing the praises of God. When they had gained the utmost firmness of conviction, they made the service of God the end of their existence, and in this cause they laid down their lives and spent money without stint. Their practice conformed with their doctrines and showed how beautiful and fraught with blessings their faith was.

In order to put their faith to the severest possible test they threw themselves into all sorts of danger and trials. This it was that made them so brave and so happy. This it

was that braced their hearts and confirmed their belief and gave certainty to their knowledge. They put themselves into the crucible of God's love until their souls were wholly purged of the dross of earthliness and thus purified, found union with God. They cleared the ways of the Lord. The path was full of thorns but to them it appeared as strewn with flowers. It was beset with terrible difficulties but to them its very difficulties proved inviting. Let one think for an instant how they forsook their former lawless lives and put down their wild and riotous passions, and he will be firmly convinced that all this wonderful change was due only to the healing influence of the grand personality of one Divine physician.

Indeed it was Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him,—that great Prophet whom God had chosen and trained under his special care—who first made the Arabs aware of the dignity of human nature and laid before them the beauty and grandeur of man's soul. Think over the sublimity of that spiritual life whose salutary example brought about such a marvellous spiritual awakening. Reflect upon the lives of the companions who rose from the depths of degradation and soared aloft until they reached the highest point of spiritual perfection. The Prophet found them living beastly lives, utterly strangers to God and His ways and possessing no definite ideas of right and wrong. He instructed them in the rules of right conduct and taught them how to lead righteous lives. He impressed upon them the necessity of purity and gave them minutest directions by which they could adopt the habits of cleanliness. He taught them to dress decently and gave them rules of hygeine and laws of preserving health. Above all, he laid much stress upon their always adopting the mean in all things. In short, he remodelled their whole society. When the savage Arabs had thoroughly mastered the rules of keeping their bodies clean, he drew their attention to moral duties and the virtues of faith, that through them they might attain to spiritual purity. When he found that they had been fully settled in habits of morality and had become

fixedly averse to what is morally sinful or hateful in the sight of God, and a new propensity to virtuous actions had been created in them, he initiated them into the Divine mysteries. He created in them a deep love for the source of all beauty and burning desire for union with Him that they might rest in Him and find enjoyment in Him everlastingly.

The teachings of the Holy Prophet as embodied in the Holy Quran are graduated and can be marked off into three stages according to the different stages of man's moral and spiritual development. The first stage comprehends rules calculated to lift up natural man from his savage and primitive state and to supply him with rudiments of morals. The second stage consists of a sublime and perfect system of ethics fitted to elevate man to the height of perfection as a moral being. The third stage is meant to make the moral man godly in the true sense of the word. At this stage man loses himself wholly in God and resigns himself completely to His will. Everywhere he sees the hand of God and finds no trace of himself or of anything else besides God. To him God is all in all. This is the final stage in the course of a seeker after God and is styled *Istiqamat* in the opening chapter of the Quran. Here all his labours are brought to an end. Here carnal desires vanish away, and self is conquered. Here the demon of lust is crushed to rise no more and the turmoil of passions ceases once for all. Then it is said; "To whom does all dominion belong today? To God, the Almighty, the Great." But the man who at his best is but moral and no more, and who has not found union with God, has not got beyond the reach of danger. The devil may claim him still as his own and the demon of lust may still get the mastery over him. Still greater victories are to be won and still mightier conquests are to be made. The man who is not wholly annihilated in God, cannot be proof against the arrows of appetite.

The glory belongs to the Holy Quran that it carries a

man to the haven of perfect security, that high and sacred place where Satan is not allowed to set foot. Through this book man is raised to the highest point of perfection he is capable of. The case is quite different with other books claiming a Divine origin. They contain only the most elementary principles of morality, and fall far short of the high standard revealed by the Quran. While it contains a perfect revelation of God's will, they are but partial and incomplete. In this respect the Quran may be called a miracle of our Prophet—a miracle not only of knowledge but of power also. The miracles associated with the names of other prophets are stale and out of date. They remain confined only in books and have no practical value whatever. But the Quran shall remain a standing miracle for all times. That this claim is not a mere empty vaunt but rests on the solid ground of fact, may be shown by the following considerations :

Firstly, the Quran comprehends all the necessary doctrines, precepts and directions which may not only guide man safely through the journey of life but also impart to him the most clear and certain knowledge respecting God, and show him the nearest and the surest way of seeing Him.

Secondly, the Quran advances the most convincing arguments in support of its truth, and we can draw upon its treasures of Divine wisdom for the refutation of all false systems of religion.

Thirdly, the language of the Quran is so sweet, beautiful and sublime, and the phrases used by it are so apt and so well chosen, that it has always defied and still defies comparison and has always won the reverential homage of the most eminent poets and orators of the world. It is moreover easy and simple and this fact further enhances its beauty. Are not these important facts sufficient to testify to the superhuman origin of the Quran?

We have said that the Quran is not only a miracle of knowledge but also a miracle of power. This is as clear as day.

The wonderful spiritual influence exerted by the Holy Quran, and the marvellous transformation brought about by its teachings, have always puzzled philosophers. It has moved the hardest heart, renewed the most perverted will and regenerated the most depraved disposition and has thus proved to the satisfaction of all persons not blinded by prejudice, that it was not Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, but the Almighty God working in him Who effected all this. A deep and impassable gulf lay between man and God; the Quran filled it up. Men were at war with truth, the Quran reconciled them to it. Those who brought themselves under its beneficent influence made such progress in spirituality that many of them had personal communion with God and were favoured with heavenly signs which were made a heritage for all true believers in the Prophet. It is for this reason that if we are asked to show signs, we are not compelled to refer to ancient time but Almighty God favours us with them in the same manner as he favoured the Prophet. The sacred books of our opponents, on the other hand, are full of meaningless fables and childish stories which serve no purpose to establish truth. They are wholly destitute of the Divine light which never goes out but shines brightly for ever more. The Quran as a miracle is, therefore sublime in both its aspects. Its blessings are wide and its miraculousness has been certified by all people.

There is another thing. If some great philosopher were to take in hand the work of reformation, he will find the reformation of a single person hardened in vice an almost impossible task. From this we may guage the greatness of the person who in a short period of time transformed a whole nation. He pulled down the fabric of their infidelity and led them into the paths of righteousness and piety. Their very faces bore witness that they loved their Lord with a mighty love. In the cause of truth, they exerted all the powers of their body and mind, and went forth, alone and resourceless, to preach the word of God

to all people of the earth. Their intellect became refined and their understanding became fitted for the comprehension of Divine mysteries. They began to shun all manner of sin and every appearance of evil, and there was implanted in them a deep love for what is good and a fixed aversion to what is bad. The men who once bowed down before idols became now the champions of Islam. They spared no pains to spread Islam until it became the religion of Arabia, Persia, Asia Minor and several other countries, and went eastward as far as China. All places where infidelity reigned supreme were visited by them, and all countries where strange gods were worshipped heard their preaching. They faced death but never fell back; were cut down but always stuck to their post. As warriors of God they ran even into the jaws of death but never deserted the standard of Islam. In this way they went to the very extremities of the earth. As rulers and administrators they proved that they were the best the world ever saw. Their practice conformed to their doctrine and in both they excelled the rest of the world. In fact this was one of the greatest miracles and is a standing testimony to the truth of the Divine origin of the Quranic revelation and the reality of revelation itself. Not a single instance of this can be produced from among the followers and companions of any other prophet, not even the followers of Moses and Jesus.

(*The Review of Religions, January, 1903*)

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Some Misunderstandings about the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

Nur-ud-Din Muneer

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The Name

Some people call it *Qadianism* some others *Mirzait* but such names only show that the coiners have little respect for the Quranic injunction forbidding them from calling one another by nick-names (49:12). The name given to the Movement by its Founder is the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect, briefly called Ahmadiyyat.

This name is in commemoration of the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him), who was both Muhammad and Ahmad. The Founder was to carry on the Holy Prophet's work under his name Ahmad.

Its Genesis

It is alleged that the Movement was masterminded by the British and started under the promptings and inducements of the Founder's two followers, Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din and Hazrat Maulana Abdul Karim. The implication contained in this charge is that it was not founded on a Divine command.

Both these allegations are dismissed by facts. Had the Founder been a British agent he would have toed their line and helped them in attaining their most cherished objective of Christianising India. This was their avowed aim and it had also the blessings of the British Crown.

But he did just the opposite. Before him Christian Missions had succeeded in converting numerous Indians to Christianity including many Muslims. Muslims were their easy prey, for they were poor and ignorant and believed that Jesus was still living in heavens in his physical body. It was easy for

Christian Missionaries to exploit their susceptibilities and so to reap a good harvest.

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Such was the condition when the Founder made his debut. He joined battle immediately with the Christian Missions and hailed Muslims to help him in combating the challenge posed by them to Islam. Christianity was flourishing on its dogmatic claims. He refuted them on the authority of the Bible, the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet, Commonsense and world history. By discovering and identifying the tomb of Jesus in Srinagar, he destroyed so to say the very foundation on which Christianity had subsisted so long. Christian missionaries were utterly confounded and had to admit that the Founder had given their religion a a death blow and that they had lost the battle irretrievably. The reader's good sense of equity and justice can judge better whether these facts prove the Founder a British agent or a courageous defender and victorious general of Islam.

The two gentlemen, who have been alleged to be his inducers in starting the Movement were his most devoted and loyal followers. They were themselves men of God and knew very well the sublime status of the Founder. In fact they had been drawn to him by his surpassing purity and excellent spiritual rank. By the very nature of their attachment to him, they could never dare to suggest to him anything for which he did not hold a Divine mandate. Moreover the Founder had already claimed to be the likeness of Jesus before these gentlemen became his disciples.

The truth of the matter is that the Movement was founded under a Divine Command. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) had prophesied that in the latter days when his *Ummah* would go astray, God would raise a reformer to revive and re-establish Islam. According to a tradition of the Holy Prophet he will be both the Promised Messiah, and Mahdi

(Ibne Majah).

When the appointed time had come, God Almighty revealed to the Founder that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and commissioned him to gather the whole mankind into the fold of Islam. This work he was to do in the name and on behalf of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him).

The Founder accordingly proclaimed the Will and Plan of God and called upon the people, especially the Muslims, to pay heed to it and rally round him. He formally founded the Movement in 1889. In that year he took the first *baiat* (oath of allegiance) from those who pledged themselves to work for the revival and rehibilitation of Islam.

So his claim rests on a Divine Command. Its truth should be tested according to the norms set for testing such claims by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet. His call should not be disregarded on account of the unfounded propaganda carried on against him by his detractors.

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Is it a New Religion ?

Some people allege that the Movement is a new religion and dub its followers as non-Muslims. However, they do not judge the issue according to the tenets of Islam. For, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet proclaim that the Faith of a person would be that which he himself professes. Simply on the basis of their professions the Holy Quran accepts even such persons as Muslims whose hearts are as yet devoid of truth. (49:15)

The Holy Prophet's example also points to the same truth. When Usama, son of Zaid, killed a Kafir in a battle, even after the Kaffir had professed faith in Islam, the Holy Prophet reprimanded him severely and rejected his plea that the Kafir had done so only to save his life.

Many other traditions of the Holy Prophet underline and emphasise the same rule. He is reported to have said that a person who recites the Kalima, *La ilaha illalallaho, Muhammad ur*

Rasulallahi (There is no Diety but Allah, Muhammad is His Messenger) : offers obligatory prayers ; pays Zakat ; observes Ramadhan fasts and performs pilgrimage to Mecca when capable of doing so is a Muslim.

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Again, he said, "One who offers the Islamic Prayers, faces the Islamic Qibla (the Kaaba), and partakes of what has been slaughtered by a Muslim is a Muslim and enjoys the protection of Allah and His Messenger. He admonished his followers not to put Allah to shame by molesting the life, honour and property of such a Muslim by denying to him the right and privileges of a Muslim. (Bukhari, Muslim and Mishkat)

We reproduce below a passage from the writings of the Founder. Anybody can judge from it whether or not it is an unambiguous profession of Islam, He says :

> "The five pillars of Islam constitute our creed.....we exhort our Jamaat to put true and sincere faith in the Holy Kalima, La ilaha Illallaho, Muhammad ur Rasullahi, to live and die by it, also to believe in all prophets and in all books, the truth of which is sanctioned by the Quran ; to observe in letter and spirit the Fasts, prayers, zakat, and pilgrimage and all prescriptions and prohibitions laid down by Almighty Allah and His Prophet. We counsel them, in short, that their belief should include all beliefs and all rules of conduct agreed upon unanimously by early Muslims, that is, all matters accepted as part of Islam by the consensus of Ahli-Sunnah. There is no option. And we hold heaven and earth as witness that this is our creed and this is our faith." (Ayyam al-Sulh, pp. 86-87)

Now when Ahmadis recite the Islamic Kalima, offer obligatory prayers, pay zakat, observe Ramadhan fasts and perform pilgrimage to Mecca, if able to do so, they are doubtlessly Muslims according to the verdict of the Holy Quran and of the Holy Prophet.

Anybody can check it for himself whether Ahmadis profess and practise Islam or not. After all Ahmadis are active in every part of the world. They have their mosques and their literature. So far as Hajj is concerned the recent ban on their entry into Mecca is in itself a proof that they did perform Hajj, otherwise there was no necessity of its imposition.

Its Objectives

Some detractors of the Movement say that it has divided Muslims and fomented among them intestine dissensions. The truth, however, is just the opposite. When the Movement came into being the Muslims were divided into no less than 72 sects each condemning the others to eternal damnation.

The Founder, in fact, paved the way for their unity. He corrected the mistakes which had crept into their beliefs and gave them again the pure and original Islam. He gathered into his fold the adherents of all the various sects, like Shias, Sunnies and Ahl-e-Hadis, etc., and merged them again into one dynamic Islamic Brotherhood. This process is steadily gaining momentum and will complete itself in its own good time.

The objective of the Movement in brief is to revive Islam, win the world for it and so to create a common Brotherhood of mankind.

The Founder and Jihad

Another fault imputed to the Founder is that he has attempted to "quench the fiery zeal" of Muslims by forbidding them from propagating Islam forcibly. He is blamed for abrogating Jihad.

It is true that the Founder has strictly prohibited his followers from aggressing against anyone in the name of religion. He has commissioned them to preach Islam only through persuasion and love and to draw mankind to it by exhibiting its

efficacy in its social, moral and spiritual elevation.

One may ask in this context the advocates of aggression for religion that if they hold it permissible for them why it should not be allowed to other people. In that case nation shall rise against nation and destroy each other. Complete chaos will reign and life on this globe will end in a trice. In fact by advocating peaceful means for preaching Islam, the Founder has done a great service to it deserving commendation and not censure.

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The Founder has in no way abolished Jihad. He has condemned only the killing of innocent people for being Kafir which is strictly forbidden in Islam (2 : 257).

The trouble is that the term Jihad is being confused with that of *Qital*. Jihad means striving in the way of God. It may be for self-purification or for taking Islam peacefully to one's feilow beings. *Qital* means warfare. It becomes Jihad, however, when done in self defence or for repelling aggression of a people attempting to destroy Islam forcibly. (2:191, 22:40)

The Promised Messiah did not ban any of the first two kinds of Jihad. Rather he spent his whole life in its persuit and his followers are doing the same since almost a century.

It is Jihad in the form of *qital* which he suspended for the time being as the requisite conditions were missing in the country. Under the British rule Muslims were free to exercise their religious obligations and so were not called upon to wage Jihad.

The Promised Messiah is not alone in giving this verdict. Muslim casuists and eminent leaders also held the same opinion. A great Muslim leader of the 19th century, Syed Ahmad Bareilivi, who is known for organising and conducting Jihad against Sikhs refused to fight against the British, for, he said they did not agress against Islam.

The Promised Messiah and Revelation

Another charge which is often brought against the Founder is his claim that "revelation has not stopped." His opponents assert that with the coming of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) revelation has ceased for ever.

The stand taken by them, however, is not tenable in face of the fundamentals of Islam. God of Islam is a living God, Whose attributes are always in action and Who reveals His grandeur every moment (55 : 30). Absolute cessation of revelation would mean that He has become dumb and has lost His power of speech. This is self-contradictory. Moreover, God Almighty has Himself rejected this idea by promising to hear and answer the prayers of His servants. (2 : 187).

The Holy Prophet has also kept the door of revelation open. He has promised the coming of reformers who will revive and re-establish Islam. If the gift of revelation is not bestowed on them they cannot effect any spiritual change in mankind, nor can they convince others of the existence of God and the working of His attributes. For, if He does not speak with them now who can be certain if He ever spoke in the past. But the reformers and many more divine persons in Islam have borne witness in the past that God spoke with them. So the vilifiers of the Founder will have either to disown several such Muslim divines or to concede that revelation continues.

The truth is that only a particular kind of revelation has stopped, i e., the one which brings the law of Shariah. Nothing will now be revealed contradicting, supplementing or rescinding any portion of the Holy Quran, for it is the perfect and Final guidance for mankind. But the kind of revelation which is subservient to it and manifests the truth of the Holy Prophet and enhances the glory of Islam, that kind of revelation has not stopped and will never stop.

The Promised Messiah has never claimed to have received a revelation averse to the Holy Quran or having the force of a new law. All his revelations support and fortify Islam and manifest the glory of God and that of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him).

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The Founder and Prophethood

His opponents have reviled the Founder on the issue of Prophethood also. They assert that no prophet will come after the Holy Prophet and that such a claimant would be a Kafir.

They rely on the verse of the Holy Quran where the Holy Prophet is called Khatamun Nabiyeen (33 : 41) and interpret it to mean the last Prophet in point of time. In support of this meaning they bring a tradition of the Holy Prophet i.e. la Nabiyya baadi (No prophet after me).

But this is not the whole story. If they quote this material, they should also take into account other verses and traditions which carry contradictory meanings. For instance, the Holy Quran says, 'And whoso obeys Allah and his Messenger (i.e., the Holy Prophet) shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous. And an excellent company are they." (4 : 70)

This verse unequivocally declares that the followers of the Holy Prophet can attain to the rank of prophethood also. Quoting Imam Raghib, Bahar al-Muhit has subscribed to this very interpretation. The word 'prophets' occurs in the verse exactly like the words 'truthful', 'martyrs' and 'righteous'. So if the last three ranks are attainable, the first rank of 'prophethood' should also be attainable for there is nothing in the text warranting different treatment to it.

Now the traditions. It is reported that when his son Ibrahim died, the Holy Prophet said, "Had Ibrahim lived he would have been a true Prophet." Further the Holy Prophet

has repeatedly called Messiah, Isa, son of Mary, who was to appear in his ummah in the latter days Nabiyyallah (prophet of God) (Muslim).

To take 'Khtamun Nabiyyen' and 'La Nabiyya Baadi' to signify the end of prophethood after the Holy Prophet is contradictory to the meaning of the verse 4 : 70 (chapter Nissa) which, as already explained keeps its door open. But no two verses of the Holy Quran can contradict each other as it would be derogatory to the wisdom of the Omnicient God (4 : 83).

So the meanings of the above verses and traditions must be reconciled. It is worth considering in this context that if the Holy Prophet had taken the verse to signify last prophet in point of time he would not have alluded to the potential prophethood of his son Ibrahim, nor called the Promised Messiah a prophet, for both of them were to appear after him. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that Sunni and Shia Muslims and indeed Muslims of all denominations sincerely believe that the Promised Messiah who will come after the Holy Prophet would be a prophet.

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The contradiction in the meanings of the Quranic verses disappears if we concede that only a certain kind of Prophethood continues. According to the Founder, no law-bearing prophet can appear after the Holy Prophet who receives his rank directly from God without his mediation. But such prophets will continue to come who are subordinate to him, fulfil his Mission and draw their authority from him.

A host of Muslim saints, scholars and commentators of renown corroborate this view. We reproduce below the names of some of them.

Hazrat Ayesha, the Holy spouse of the Holy Prophet ; Hazrat Imam Ibn Sireen (d. 110 A. H. / 729 A. D.); Imam Mohammad Raghib Al-Asphani (d. 502 A. H. /); Saint of saints, Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 561 A. H. /

1166 A.D.) ; the distinguished Spanish Soofi, Hazrat M hy-ud-Din Ibn-e-Arabi (d. 638 A.H./ 1240 A.D.) ; the great historian of Islam Allamma Abdur Rahman Ibn-e-Khaldun (d. 808 A.H./ 1406 A D.) ; the great saint, Hazrat Syed Abdul Karim Jilani ; the eminent scholar, Hazrat Imam Abdul Wahab Sha'rani (d. 976 A.H./ 1568 A.D.) ; the great Mohaddis of the Indo-Pak sub-continent, Hazrat Mullah Ali Qari (d. 1014 A.H./ 1606 A.D.) ; Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Farooki Sarhindi, Mujaddid of the eleventh century (d. 1034 A.H./ 1624 A.D.) ; Imam-ul-Hind Hazrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddis of Delhi (d. 1176 A.H./ 1762 A.D.), Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi, the Founder of the Dar-ul Uloom Deoband (India) (d. 1297 A.H./ 1880 A.D.) ; and Hazrat Maulana Abul Hasanat, Abdul Hayee of Farangimahal, Lucknow, India.

All these scholars and saints are esteemed as guides and reformers. They affirm that the coming of a Prophet subordinate to the Holy Prophet does not in any way violate his status as Kha amun Nabiyyin. If the Founder is denounced for this view all these scholars and saints will also be denounced. Hazrat Ayesha, the holy and learned spouse of the Holy Prophet is renowned for her keen understanding. She has taken exactly the same stand on the issue of the Holy Prophet's finality as taken by the Promised Messiah.

Now we may consider the status of prophethood claimed by the Founder. He has called himself in his writings an ummati Nabi (follower Prophet) i.e., he has received this rank through the mediation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Whatever ranks he claims for himself he claims them as a deputy and subordinate of his exalted master, the Holy Prophet. He is a Mujaddid (reformer), Isa, son of Mary, Messiah, Mahdi, Krishna, Buddha, etc., but all these ranks have been conferred upon him for his unique love for the Holy Prophet and for his serving his Mission most successfully. In fact he claims no distinction whatsoever for him and says that whatever spiritual rank has been bestowed upon him, that is through

the blessings of the Holy Prophet.

Side by side with this, his detractors should also try to examine, equitably and justly, the work he has done. He has not tried in any way to sound his own trumpet, but to vindicate Islam and to glorify the name of Muhammad. All his books, and they are not less than 80, are replete with these two themes e.g., Islam is the true and universal religion, and the Holy Prophet attained to the highest point of spiritual excellence, beyond which humans cannot even imagine. He has affirmed again and again that all spiritual progress now depends on following the Holy Prophet. If whatever he has said and done strengthens Islam what is the difficulty in owning him as one of its defenders and champions, especially when his claims in no way contradict the spirit of the Holy Quran and the injunctions of the Holy Prophet. We hope that the reader will consider this issue with an unbiased and a circumspect mind and will not be led astray by the weight of the centuries old sentiments and prejudiced clamourings.

The Founder and the British

The critics of the Founder have also reviled him for his praising the British and dubbed him as their agent.

The Founder did praise them but not for self-aggrandisement. He did so to express his admiration for their good government. The British established law and order in the country and the people enjoyed full freedom. They had taken over from the Sikhs whose atrocious treatment of Muslims was quite fresh in the mind of the Founder.

Sikh presecution of Muslims at that time is well-known. The Punjab, so to say, was a veritable prison for them. Call to prayers could not be made loudly and if anybody slaughtered a cow, he ran the risk of capital punishment. Their life, property and honour was ever in jeopardy. A tradition goes that Muslim mothers would hide their daughters in big grain containers

to save them from Sikh ravishers. No one was free to profess, practice or preach Islam.

In contrast to it, the British rule proved a great boon for them. Now they were free to profess, practise and preach their religion. Their life, honour and property was fully protected. It is for the benevolent government which the British established in the country that the promised Messiah praised them and he had every right to do so as a good citizen and a conscientious Muslim. For Islam enjoins upon its followers to live peacefully under a lawful government and to co-operate with it (4 : 60). Moreover he is not alone in praising them. His contemporaries did the same. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, an eminent Muslim leader of the time is one. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, lamenting the death of Queen Victoria in one of his Urdu poems acknowledged that she was a great well wisher of Muslims and "a shadow of God over India." More glowing tribute to her memory could not be imagined !

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The Founder and the Holy Prophet

Another charge ascribed to the Founder is that he has arrogated to himself a position superior to that of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him).

It is very unfair and unjust for his critics to say so. The Founder was the most ardent admirer of the Holy Prophet and loved him to distraction. Far from claiming precedence over him he considered himself his most humble servant, in fact a non-entity before him. Whatever spiritual rank he attained he attributed it to the Holy Prophet's grace. The Holy Prophet was his most beloved Master. We reproduce below some passages from his writings which will show how he felt about the Holy Prophet.

> "I have always wondered how high must be the station of this Arabian Prophet Muhammad ! Thousands of blessings and prayers of peace for him ! Impossible it is to measure the height of his station. Impossible to

have the idea of his purffiying powers. Pity therefore that his greatness goes unrecognised still. The conception of the One God had all but disappeared from the face of this earth : The stalwart who established it again in human hearts is he. He loved God to the utmost and he loved and sympathized with mankind equally, sacrificing his life for their sake. No wonder, God, who knew the secret of his heart *raised him above Prophets and above all men who had gone before him or were to come after him.*

(*Haqiqatul Wahi* pp. 115-116)

"He, the light I love,
To him therefore I belong:
All things is he, nothing me
And let this last word be.
"All we have is his
Witness thou art O God of this;
Who showed us the face of God
that moon-faced is he."

(*Qadian ke Arya aur Ham* p. 48)

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The Founder

The Founder, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in the year 1835 at Qadian, a town some 70 miles to the northeast of Lahore. Descending from Haji Barlas, an uncle of Emperor Amir Taimur he belonged ethnically to the Persian stock.

His ancestors had migrated from Samarkand during the reign of Babar. The court of Delhi granted them an estate where they settled permanently. The village founded by them now bears the name Qadian.

The family saw many ups and downs during the period of 300 years which elapsed between the settling of the family at Qadian and the birth of the Founder. Sometime they ruled over a large territory and at another their fortune was reduced

to its lowest ebb.

From his very childhood, he was given to meditation and concentration. As he grew up this habit gripped him the more and he remained continuously absorbed in his worship. It was apparent that he was a man of God not of this world.

According to the family traditions, his father arranged for his education and he received elementary instruction in Arabic and Persian. He loved solitude more than the society of his friends and would sit aside pondering over the text of the Quran and other religious books.

In his youth he took to his studies and devotions even more intensively and under a Divine Command observed fasts for a period of many months. He saw true dreams and visions in which he would meet the Prophets of old. He would supplicate for the kingdom of God to come on this earth and for the truth of Islam to be established. His dreams and visions got deepened in substance and revelation began to descend on him. In 1876, God Almighty revealed to him of the imminent death of his father and upon his showing alarm and anxiety about his future, reassured him of His continued sustenance.

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After the death of his father, he devoted all his energies to the cause of Islam. Islam was at this time in a miserable condition. It looked like a force spent up and exhausted. Even its votaries had lost faith in it and were doubtful of its viability. Christians, Hindus and Materialists were out to destroy it.

The Founder joined battle with all these forces, and established the truth of Islam with clear arguments. He wrote some 80 books in its defence and boosted the morale of its votaries. In consequence of his exposition of Islam opposition to it is dieing out and mankind is preparing itself to embrance it in the end.

His work

His greatest contribution consists in furnishing proofs of the existence of God and of the working of His attributes. Thousands of his prophecies are recorded in his books with full particulars of their fulfilment and bearing authentication by contemporary witnesses. Some of these prophecies pertain to his personal affairs, some to the affairs of his friends and foes and some to national and international issues. In point of time these prophecies cover nearer as well as distant future.

The Founder being a weak mortal and subject to all human limitations could not foresee these events, nor he could direct their course according to his own wishes. The fulfiiment of these prophecies, therefore, prove the existence of an Omnicient and Almighty God Who revealed to him the things of the unseen.

Next comes his vindication of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him). For centuries on he had been painted in blackest colours and made the target of foulest attacks by his critics. So much so that instead of being a benefactor of mankind as he really was, he looked like its enemy.

The Founder left no stone unturned to undo the evil and to restore to the Holy Prophet the true image of his highest spiritual station and of his unique love for mankind. He dilated upon his excellent qualities and irrefutably showed that the salvation of mankind lay only in following his precepts and his example.

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Exaltation of the Quran

His work in glorifying the Quran is similarly unique and will go down in history as a great monument to his love for it. Befor him it had become virtually a sealed book unable to yield any new truth in answer to fresh human needs. The interpretation put upon it by old commentators had come to be regarded as final.

The founder revolutionised this attitude and declared that far from being a static code of formulas, the Quran was inexhaustible storehouse of knowledge, yielding always fresh spiritual truths. He said that as the physical universe, the work of God Almighty provided ever new insights into its secrets so did the Holy Quran, being the Word of God, ever furnish the human soul fresh peeps into spiritual phenomena.

His denunciation of the theory of abrogation in the Quran is another outstanding service rendered by him to it. Commentators before him, due to their inability to reconcile the meanings of some of its verses with some others had formulated this theory. He rejected it categorically for if even one verse was accepted as abrogated the excellence of the whole Quran would become doubtful. Taking the stand that not a single verse is abrogated nor it will ever be he restored to the Holy Quran its qualities of excellence and perfection.

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He further asserted that unlike other scriptures the Quran itself furnished positive proofs af all ifs claims, obviating the necessity of tapping any external source for them. He explained that the themes, oft-repeated in it, like the existence of God, the working of His Powers, the Truth of the Holy Prophet, the perfection of the Quranic law and its ability to serve as permanent guidance for man, were fully substantiated in it.

To illustrate the beauties of the Holy Quran he wrote his monumental work, Barahini-Ahmadiyya. Its four parts were completed by 1884 and the fifth part in 1905. In it he has set forth the proofs of the truth of the Holy Prophet and that of the Holy Quran, all drawn from the Quran itself. He challenged the critics to break his arguments and offered a prize of Rs. 10,000.00 for anyone who would do so. The book is there and the challenge is still there, but nobody has so far come forward to win the prize.

Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya is a peerless exegesis of the Holy Quran and was acclaimed as such by many contemporary Muslim

scholars. One, Maulvi Muhammad Hssain of Batala, a reputed leader of the Ahle Hadis sect in Islam welcomed it 'as a unique defence of Islam, the like of which had not appeared in the past 13 centuries.'

In the end we may appeal to the good sense of the reader to consider the case of the Movement and that of its Founder with an unbiased mind. Accusations have always been heaped against reformers. Their opponents have always tried to pull them down and to create hatred against them. But a man can sift truth from falsehood and judge between right and wrong. A tree is known by the fruits it yields. The Founder and his Movement should be adjudged by the work they have done. The Jammaat has taken Islam to the ends of the earth and firmly established the truth of the Holy Prophet and that of the Holy Quran. It is upto the reader now to judge.

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